

ABUSE OF AUTHORITY IN THE HOME

George W. Allison

The right kind of home is a place in which the woman becomes more womanly and the man becomes more manly. It is a good thing for a man to know that he is a man, for a woman to know that she is a woman, and for a child to know that he is a child. Sad results come when a child fails to recognize his position and becomes disrespectful; when the woman tries to be a half-man, half-woman, disliking her own unique capacities; and when the milk-toast husband fails to rise to the responsibilities which the headship of a household demands.

It is not an accident that a generation of domineering wives, irresponsible husbands, and disrespectful children have appeared at the same time. The man who cannot rule his wife as God commanded cannot long rule his children. The man who does not have the respect and loving submission of his wife will soon have children who treat him with disrespect. The result is bad for all concerned. Women are cheated if their husbands do not take real leadership and children are cheated even more. Only when the place of authority is accepted by the husband and

honored by the wife can the true dignity of both manhood and womanhood be appreciated. The strength of a man's character and the beauty of a woman's character appear most normally when he takes his Bible-given place as leader and she takes her place as helper.

Authority can be abused. It can be to a man's honor or to his disgrace. It is an abuse of authority for a man to handle his children with harsh revengeful discipline. The Bible plainly commands bodily punishments for a child. *“He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes”* (Prov. 13:24). Effective discipline must be done in love. Much discipline is only an expression of revenge and offensive to a sense of justice.

Too many parents tolerate defiance until they are exasperated. They tell the child, “No!” He defies them. At this time, they should quietly and in complete self-control punish disobedience. Instead, they endure his disobedience until aroused to a keen and bitter vexation, and then they “let off steam” by punishing the child in a spirit of anger. They have done wrong, and probably the child has been wronged. This same spirit causes a man to take a milk stool to a heifer or a bridle to his team. The same

spirit is seen in parents who knock their children about their heads. A boy's head is not a soccer ball. It is not his head that has been padded for punishment. Punish the child, and do it thoroughly, and then put him on your lap and tell him that you love him and why he must learn obedience.

It is an abuse of authority for a man to force his family into circumstances where they cannot obey God. Some men are *“enemies of the cross of Christ...whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things”* (Phil. 3:19). They want nothing to do with the church and will deliberately plan to move their families out of contact with the church. Other men are spiritual midgets who do not believe that God will keep His word. They do not believe that God will adequately provide for them if they keep their families close to the fellowship of the church. They will uproot their families and move them into a spiritual desert for a more pleasing pay check. There is no Christian fellowship, no sound, Scriptural preaching, no place to continue steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and the breaking of bread. These things are given second place, and money matters are given first place. Yes, the Bible says, *“Wives, be in subjection unto your own*

husbands” (Eph. 5:22). It also says, “Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers” (Rom. 13:1). But when civil government tries to force a Christian into a position where he must disobey God, then, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). I do not believe that a Christian wife must submit to an unchristian husband when he attempts to force her into circumstances where she cannot obey God. This is an abuse of authority. A husband has no authority to defy God!

It is an abuse of authority for a man to expect right-doing without exemplifying right-doing. God demands as much morally and spiritually of a man as He does of a woman. God expects a father, in every way, to be an example of spiritual fervency and moral purity, even as his wife is to be. God has one standard of right-doing for both. Cigarette smoking is wrong for a woman! It is dirty, wasteful, rude, and harmful. The same is true for a man. Cursing is wrong for a woman. It is indecent, wicked, and against God. It is just as wrong for a man.

Any man who sets one standard for his wife and children and another for himself is a hypocrite. He is advocating what he does not practice. Any man who drinks, smokes, and laughs at filth, but does not want his family to act that way is a plain hypocrite. Any man who wants his family to do right and to be Christians, but does not set the pattern, is a slacker and a shirker. He does not deserve a loving family. His family cannot thoroughly respect him. You have no right to expect your boy to be one bit better than you are. If your actions cancel what you have to say, if your children act the way you do, you have not one right to rebuke them or discipline them.

God needs strong men for heads of families. God needs men of character who will use their authority for His honor. Man, if your home is wrong, you are wrong! You are first of all responsible. Have you misused the place that God has given you? Only God through Christ can make a man what he must be in order to be a good husband and father. May you say with Joshua, “...but as for

me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Josh. 24:15).

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“Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.

We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.

For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:

That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children:

That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:

And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.”

—Psalm 78:1-8

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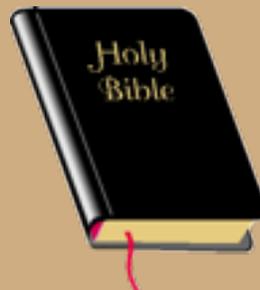
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